

Annual Report

Healthwatch North Tyneside Annual Report 2020-21



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Message from our Chair

This year has been challenging in terms of the work of Healthwatch North Tyneside, all the health and care services, service users and for all of us as individuals, as we have adjusted to life and loss during the pandemic.

I am incredibly proud of the way that Healthwatch North Tyneside has stepped up over the last 12 months. We worked hard to deliver our core charitable aims of providing information about health and care services and making sure people's voices are heard. We joined forces with our partners to help practically in these difficult times. The staff team, volunteers and my fellow trustees have done a fantastic job in rethinking how we work and responding to emerging issues and opportunities.

Listening to people's views and feedback is the bedrock of everything we do. We had to innovate to engage with people during the pandemic. We increased our online engagement activities, delivered information and surveys through people's doors and worked with others. Since February, our involvement in the delivery of the GP led vaccine centres enabled us to engage with people after they had their vaccination - an amazing opportunity to reach people across the borough.

Our role in providing information has been more important than ever. We focused on ensuring people understood how to access services and have led several information campaigns on health issues, and we are a key member of the Living Well North Tyneside Partnership.

Partnership working has been critical to our success this year. We have worked with organisations including VODA, North Tyneside Carers' Centre and Phoenix Detached Youth Project, to reach people, provide direct support to residents and respond to issues. Our relationships with voluntary sector partners, North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and North Tyneside Council have never been stronger.

Our Director, Paul Jones and I spend a lot of time working with service providers and commissioners, using the information residents share with us to influence the way services are designed and delivered. We participate in key board meetings, including the Health and Wellbeing Board and Future Care Board, and work behind the scenes, sharing feedback and enabling actions to be taken quickly. I am particularly pleased to see investment that the CCG, Council and voluntary sector are putting into understanding and addressing digital inequalities, an issue we have championed since summer 2020.



"I'm grateful to the staff team and volunteers who have risen to the challenge of this unprecedented situation amazingly with good heart and care. I'd also like to thank my fellow trustees for their hard work in continuing to make Healthwatch North Tyneside the respected organisation it is and helping to improve local health and care services."

Julia Charlton, Chair of Healthwatch North Tyneside

About us

Here to make health and care better

Our mission is to champion the experiences, views and needs of local people to positively affect health and social care services in North Tyneside.

We are here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Healthwatch North Tyneside is an independent charity based in North Shields. We are part of a national network, supported by Healthwatch England. Nationally and locally, we have the power to make sure that those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

Our goals



1 To provide high quality information

We help people find the information they need about health and care services in North Tyneside.



2 To listen to your views

We listen to what people like about services and what they think could be improved.



3 To help improve health and care

We share your views with those who have the power to make change happen.



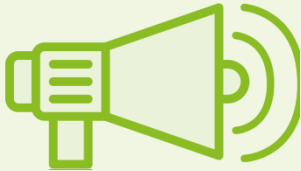
“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Our year in numbers

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

1,661 people

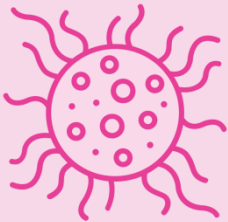
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided information about local services to

24,718 people

this year through our leaflets and publications.

Responding to the pandemic



We supported

150 people

during the COVID-19 pandemic through our teams delivering food parcels, prescriptions and 'keep in touch calls' weekly during the first lockdown, and through our support of partner organisations.

Making a difference to care



Your views and feedback has helped us to work with partners to improve:

- Access to digital services.
- Information about changes to services during lockdowns.
- How the vaccine programme is delivered locally.
- How services are delivered as lockdown restrictions ease.

Health and care that works for you



26 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work.

Over 700 hours volunteered

This number is less than usual because of the covid restrictions on our work.

We employ six staff

All our staff are part-time, working 3.6 FTE, and we pride ourselves in providing staff with flexible and safe working.



Credit: Eye of the Tyne Photography

Responding to COVID-19



Responding to the pandemic was one of our top priorities during 2020/21. Here's what we did...

Service Changes Information Hub

People told us they were confused and unsure what was happening with all the changes to services in March 2020. We created our online [Service Changes Information Hub](#) to help keep residents up to date with changes in local health and care service during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Hub brought together in one place, rapidly changing information about local services including: advice and guidance, operating hours, and service changes and closures. The Hub included sections on local hospitals, urgent and emergency care, GP practices, mental health services, dental care, pharmacies and where to get help. All of which were vitally important to residents at the time. This continues to be an important source of information for people as local services change.

Urgent and emergency care 	If you need help 
GPs and primary care 	Hospitals 
Pharmacies 	Dentists 



Credit: Eye of the Tyne Photography

Helping people during lockdowns

During the first lockdown we partnered with North Tyneside Carers' Centre to help make regular contact calls to carers who were isolated, so they had a friendly person to stay connected with.

Our staff team also supported VODA's Good Neighbours project by delivering food and collecting and delivering prescriptions for people who were shielding.



Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination programme

We have played a vital role in supporting the delivery of the vaccine programme in North Tyneside. When the roll-out of the vaccine started in December 2020, we worked with North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and TyneHealth, the GP federation leading the local vaccine programme, to coordinate communications to local people and ensure they had the information they needed.



Helping at vaccine centres

Members of our team have also been volunteering at the GP led vaccine clinics and mobile units and have worked closely with VODA to support the successful delivery of the vaccine programme.

We continue to work to ensure good quality information and communications with local people with a partnership of organisations including North Tyneside Council, North Tyneside CCG, TyneHealth, VODA and Community Health Champions.

Our COVID-19 vaccination survey

In January 2021, we launched a survey for people to share their experiences of the vaccine programme. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive about the experience of getting a vaccine and the role of the volunteers.

Some issues were highlighted that were then acted upon, including a consistent approach to issuing vaccination cards and more information to help people to understand the differences between the national and local North Tyneside GP vaccination programmes.

Views and feedback

Hearing from local people

The pandemic meant that we had to cancel much of our face-to-face engagement activities and outreach work that we would normally do in communities across the borough. Usually, 80 percent of the feedback we receive is through our face-to-face activities, so we had to rethink how we could reach people. During this year we have:

- Delivered 5,000 leaflets and surveys to homes across the borough through letter boxes and with the support of partners including The Foodbank, Morrison's Community Champions, Wallsend Memorial Hall and People's Centre, and VODA.
- Handed out information to approximately 8,000 people about our GP access survey to people in North Tyneside vaccine centres and conducted interviews.
- Participated in 40 online events organised by other voluntary organisations or community groups to gather people's views and feedback.
- Held 15 online engagement sessions about key issues people have raised with us.
- Increased our reach through social media by 43% on last year.
- Worked with community groups to hear what their users are telling them.

Whilst the number of people we heard from this year is slightly lower than last year, we have been able to reach different people than we would have normally. We began a programme of engagements at the GP led vaccine centres in early March 2021 and are continuing to use this amazing opportunity to talk to people about their views about health and care services.

"We know that we have not been able to hear from all parts of our community this year. However, we are proud that we have tried our best in difficult circumstances, and I would like to thank our partners for their support."

"As lockdown restrictions ease and the vaccination programme progresses, we'll continue to increase our face-to-face engagement activities, particularly at the vaccine sites in North Tyneside."

Paul Jones, Director, Healthwatch North Tyneside





Living Well North Tyneside

The pandemic has highlighted that it is more important than ever before to look after our health and wellbeing. During the pandemic we heard how people have had difficulty finding useful, trusted information about local health and care services, and about how to get involved in events and groups.

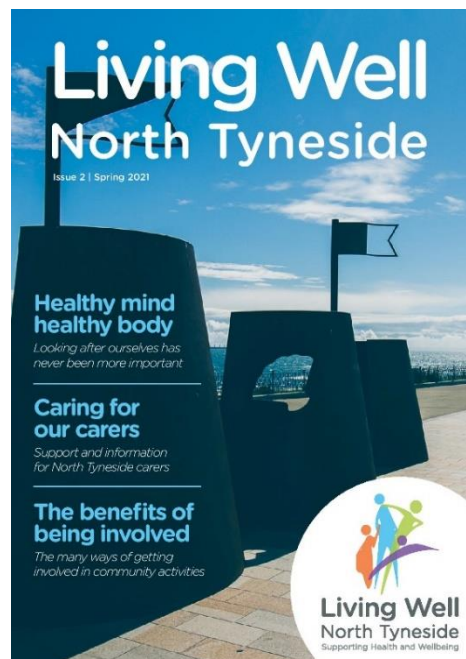
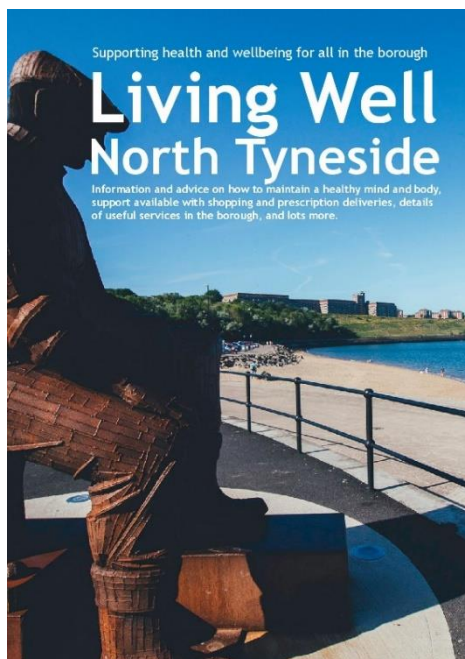
Healthwatch North Tyneside is an active member of **The Living Well North Tyneside Partnership**, a group of local organisations working to improve access to information in the borough. The Partnership includes North Tyneside Council, North Tyneside CCG, the four Primary Care Networks (PCNs) of GP Practices, TyneHealth GP Federation, VODA, and Community and Healthcare Forum.

In summer 2021, a new website called Living Well North Tyneside will be launched. It will include information about living well in your neighbourhood and across the borough, and the support and services that are available locally. Our evidence helped to secure lottery funding for this partnership, and we have contributed to the design and development of this website and provided some of the content about health and care issues.

Healthwatch identified an opportunity to share important information with people whilst they were waiting for their COVID vaccine, so we led on the production of two magazines that have been handed out at North Tyneside's vaccination centres.

33,000 copies of the first edition were handed out to people getting their vaccinations between January and March. It was targeted at older people and other higher risk groups who were prioritised for the vaccine. The content included what to do when you feel ill in North Tyneside, healthy mind and healthy body, tips for keeping well in winter, and information about local support services.

The second edition included more general health and wellbeing information and 55,000 copies are being distributed.





Key issues you have told us about



Older people's mental health

Our report into older people's mental health was published in October 2020. This report was based on 61 people's experiences of older people's dementia and memory service. This includes service users, family members and carers. We worked in partnership with North Tyneside's Mental Wellbeing in Later Life Board, who are reviewing mental health pathways. The Board reviewed the draft report and helped to refine the recommendations. The evidence was gathered before the pandemic.

Within the report, we reflect on what people told us about their experiences of mental health support and compared this with the current National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidelines and the Government's commitments to dementia. We suggested 19 actions that would help improve the experiences of older people, focusing on:

- Access to information
- Support for individuals with memory issues
- Families and carers
- Improving care coordination
- Reviewing and planning care

The Mental Wellbeing in Later Life Board has used this report to develop an action plan and has begun to address several of the issues identified and further work is included in North Tyneside's Transformation Plan.



Experiences of health and care during COVID

In Spring/Summer 2020, Healthwatch North Tyneside began seeking evidence of people’s experiences during the pandemic. We knew that health and care services had changed significantly, and we wanted to hear about people’s experiences. We ran an online survey, talked to local people through online meetings, spoke to different voluntary sector organisations and to health and care providers. We heard from nearly 500 people about their experiences.

We presented our findings to North Tyneside’s Health and Wellbeing Board and Future Care Board to influence the way the board made decisions and delivered services. We also used the findings to identify key pieces of work. Here is more information about our projects.

What to do if you feel ill in North Tyneside

There are several ways to get medical help when you feel ill and it can be confusing to know which service to use when. Here is a round up of your options in North Tyneside.

- NHS 111**
Phone 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk for medical advice and information. They will help you get the care you need and can make you an appointment with your GP or Urgent Care Centre.
- Local pharmacy**
Your local pharmacy can give you advice, help you look after yourself and treat minor conditions.
- Your GP practice**
Most practices are using a triage system either by phone or online. You will need to explain the problem you have and the support you need so that the practice staff can arrange the necessary care or treatment - by phone, video or in person.
- Livi**
A video consultation with a trained GP who has access to your medical records. You will need to download the app and register to join the service.
- Urgent Care**
At North Tyneside General Hospital (Bake Lane), urgent care provides medical care for minor injuries and minor illnesses which are not life-threatening. Ring 111 first.
- Accident and Emergency**
Treatment for the most serious, life threatening conditions at the Northumbria Special Emergency Care Hospital (NSECHE) in Crumbling or the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) in Newcastle. Ring 111 or 999 first.

For more details about each of these services or for more information about Healthwatch North Tyneside: Visit www.hwnt.co.uk | Telephone 0191 263 5321 | Email info@hwnt.co.uk

Getting the care that you need

People told us they were confused about what health services were available to them when they felt ill. The NHS’s ‘Do the right thing’ campaign, encouraged people to contact 111 before attending Urgent Treatment Centres or Accident and Emergency. To support this regionally, we produced a simple guide about the different services available and distributed it to over 90,000 people. Additionally, we produced a video guide and shared digitally.

Prescription Deliveries in North Tyneside

A guide to pharmacies and their delivery options

Did you know that you can get your prescriptions delivered? During the coronavirus pandemic, people told us how helpful it would be to have clear information about how you can get a prescription delivered. The NHS in North Tyneside does not fund pharmacies to provide a delivery service so some may charge. This guide details the services that local pharmacies provide - mainly this involves a driver picking up your prescription from a local pharmacy. In addition to these local services, there are several online pharmacies that will deliver your medication through the post.

We produced this guide because people told us it would be helpful. As well as an overview of prescription delivery services, we have also answered some Frequently Asked Questions that provide more information - see www.hwnt.co.uk or ring 0191 263 5321 for details.

Please tell us about your experiences of getting prescriptions, and your other health and care experiences here: www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/haveyoursay
We use this information to help improve services for local people - your feedback matters.

Key to table of pharmacies

- ✓ Prescription delivery available
- ✓ Delivery service offered but may be full to capacity or a waiting list in operation
- ✗ Currently no delivery service

Name and contact details	Delivery available	Cost	How to arrange	Details
Backworth Backworth Neveline Pharmacy 0191 268 8662 Unit 2 Old Co-op Building, Church Road, Backworth, NE27 0JE	✓	Free	Contact the pharmacy or register on their Facebook page.	One-off prescriptions and repeat prescriptions can be delivered. Contact pharmacy for areas covered.
Battle Hill Lloyds Pharmacy Battle Hill 0191 262 9427 Battle Hill Medical Centre Beimont Close, Wallband, NE28 9DX	✓	£60 per year / £30 for 6 months / £5 one-off	Contact the pharmacy by phone or in person to register.	One-off prescriptions and repeat prescriptions can be delivered. Contact pharmacy for areas covered.

VI produced December 2020. All information in this leaflet correct at the time of publishing. Please contact pharmacy directly for most up-to-date advice.

Getting prescriptions

We identified that prescription delivery was more important than ever during the lockdowns, but people were unaware of what services were available.

In response we produced a useful guide to getting prescriptions, including a list of different services available and FAQs.

We asked people about their experiences of getting prescriptions and 58 people shared feedback with us, which will be fed back to service providers and commissioners.

Access to services at General Practice

Access to GP services has been the most mentioned issue for the fifth year running. This is not surprising in a year when there was a major shift towards telephone appointments and triage. We have prioritised this issue for continued focus in 2021-22.

In May 2020, we launched a short online survey to get feedback from people about their experiences of GP services during the first lockdown. We wanted to identify lessons for the future. In July 2020, we published our initial findings and shared this information with practice managers to help them understand the issues people were facing, to enable them to make informed decisions to improve services.

During the pandemic, access to GP services continued to be a major issue for local residents. Recognising the continued pressures on GP services, we launched a further research project in March 2021, to understand people's experiences of accessing GP services (by phone, online, face-to-face, etc) and how people want services to run in the future. The information will be used by the CCG, Primary Care Network and practices to review how they work and develop future plans.

In a separate but related piece of work, Healthwatch North Tyneside have been engaging with people who have used the Livi video GP consultation service to hear about their views and experiences. This Livi focused activity has been commissioned by North Tyneside CCG to contribute to their evaluation of the Livi services being piloted.

Maternity and early years



A number of new mums had shared their views with us through our 'experiences of care during covid survey'. In autumn 2020 we launched a maternity and early years research project to hear the experiences of people who were pregnant or had a young child during the pandemic.

Several issues emerged from this research. It was clear that services had changed dramatically during the pandemic and experiences in the first lockdown were quite different to later in the year.

We have shared key issues and important lessons for the future with service providers and commissioners, including:

- Maintaining access to support with antenatal, breast feeding, and baby weight - using virtual and face-to-face methods
- The importance of continuity of care
- Lessons about virtual support and reaching those most in need of support
- Experiences of services, including community midwives, health visitors, GPs and hospital sites.

Equalities and digital access

The pandemic brought about a major shift of services to online or virtual delivery. From the early days of the pandemic, we were hearing concerns from people who did not have access to online information, either because they did not have the equipment, the knowhow, the interest or the money to afford data.

We highlighted this to North Tyneside CCG, North Tyneside Council and other voluntary sector organisations. A partnership has been created to address digital inequalities and a major research project to understand digital poverty in North Tyneside has been funded by the CCG and will be used regionally to understand the issue better. Our evidence was used to support a successful lottery funding bid led by VODA. Healthwatch North Tyneside has been credited for championing issues of inequalities and highlighting the need for action.

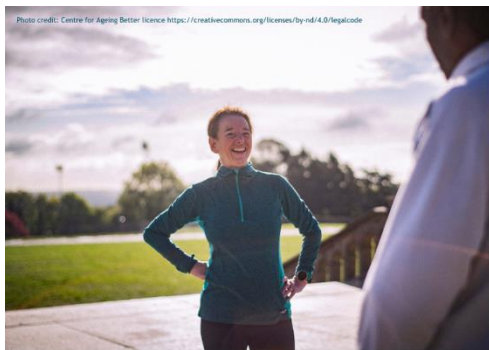
“The work which Healthwatch has been doing will be invaluable in terms of how we assess the impact of the pandemic on our communities from an inequalities point of view.”

Jackie Laughton, Assistant Chief Executive, North Tyneside Council

Adult Social Care

As well as hearing from people about their experiences of adult social care services through our work, we have been additionally commissioned by North Tyneside Council to conduct interviews with service users about their experiences. This feeds into service improvement work that the teams do within the Council. Access to information and resolving issues with service providers are key themes emerging from this work.

Menopause



Acting on feedback we decided to gather information from people about their experiences of getting support with the menopause.

We launched a brief online survey on 8 March 2021, International Women’s Day. We heard from 65 women who highlighted issues including a lack of trusted information, a need for GP training, a lack of peer support groups, and poor support in the workplace. These issues are being worked on by the Living Well Locally Board.

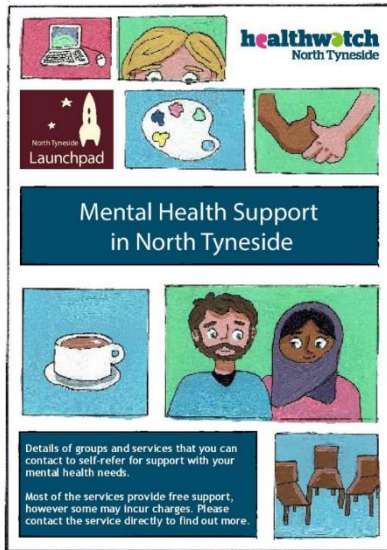
Waiting for treatment

Concerns about waiting times have featured highly in the national media. Whilst information from the NHS showed that waiting times in North Tyneside are not as bad as in many other parts of the UK, some residents had been talking to us about their experiences. We ran a short survey asking for people’s view and experiences. People told us that the key issues are:

- Being kept informed about delays and their place on the waiting list.
- Having access to support whilst waiting, particularly with pain management.
- Feeling forgotten about or having to continuously chase for updates.

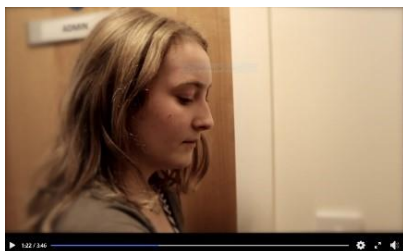
We will continue to monitor the situation as COVID-19 restrictions change.

Mental health



In January 2021 we launched an updated version of the Mental Health Support in North Tyneside leaflet, which provides information about support services people can access without needing to be referred by a doctor.

The NHS are beginning a national programme to significantly transform mental health services over the next three years. Healthwatch has highlighted the issues users have told us about to improve mental health services over the last three years. In particular, having a one stop shop for mental health services and a trusted assessment between different services, so users do not have to repeat themselves and therefore get the care they need quickly.



In October 2020, Phoenix Detached Youth Project launched their new video aimed at educating GPs on how to talk to young people about mental health. The film was funded by Healthwatch North Tyneside as part of our commitment to hearing young voices on health and care issues. It was written, produced and acted out by young people from the project, and is designed as a good practice guide.

Carers

We have a strong relationship with North Tyneside Carers' Centre and have jointly worked to gather carers' views and experiences during COVID-19.

Our joint survey and engagement activities led to the development of increased support for parent carers, increased awareness within service providers and decision makers of support for carers during the pandemic, and a better understanding of the needs of young carers.

We are active members of North Tyneside's Carers Partnership Board and work with the Carers' Centre to ensure carers' issues are addressed.



Our plans for 2021-22

Normally we would have conducted an annual survey of North Tyneside residents, to understand the issues that matter to them and to identify our key priorities. However, we decided not to do an annual survey in 2020/21 because of the pandemic. Instead, we will use the extensive evidence we have gathered during the pandemic to inform these key themes to our work over the coming year.

Key themes for 2021-22

Providing information

Continue to support the development of Living Well North Tyneside. Identify information needs of local residents and how these should be addressed. Support the delivery of the covid vaccination programme.

Accessing care and support

Continue our focus on people's access to GP and Primary Care services. Understand people's experiences of accessing outpatient treatment, particularly their experiences of virtual contact (by phone or online) and frequency of contact/support.

Good quality communications

Understand how services can best communicate effectively with service users and families in care settings.

Digital inclusion and equalities

Understand the impact of service changes on people from all parts of our community and identify gaps in services, particularly focusing on seldom heard groups.

Service users' voices in system changes

Champion service users and North Tyneside residents' voices in NHS and care system changes, particularly the Government's plans outlined in their White Paper published in April 2021.

Other key activities

Hearing from local people

Review how we can better engage with people from across North Tyneside's communities and consider opportunities for face-to-face engagement as national restrictions change.

Being a robust organisation

Revise our strategic plan as the situation changes over coming months and look for opportunities to secure other commissioned work that fit with our aims as a charity.



Volunteers

At Healthwatch North Tyneside we are supported by 26 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

This year has been particularly challenging due to having to move our engagements online. Despite this our amazing volunteers have still been able to support us.

This year our volunteers have been:

- Helping people have their say from home by interviewing people over the telephone and sharing our surveys online.
- Helping people have their say about GP access by handing out survey packs at vaccine centres.
- Promoting Healthwatch and the information we share with friends, colleagues and family.
- Helping marginalised groups have their say by supporting online discussion groups.
- Networking with local community groups.



Volunteer - Sarah

"I started volunteering at Healthwatch in November 2020 and have worked on a couple of projects including engaging with religious communities and the GP access survey. I've really enjoyed my time so far. I started volunteering because I want to improve health and social care in North Tyneside, where I've lived all my life. I'm studying adult nursing and would like to become a research nurse, so this is a great opportunity to gain research skills."



Volunteer - Austin

"This year has been challenging with everything moving online. I've still supported Healthwatch by inputting paper survey data at home, attending online volunteer meetings and by sharing surveys and trusted health information within my networks. When restrictions are lifted, I'm looking forward to going out to speak to people about their experiences of health and care services. This is important to me because I believe that service delivery should be designed according to what people using those services have said."



Volunteer - Antalya

"Working with Healthwatch and with the other volunteers is such a fun and rewarding experience. As a volunteer, I've taken part in some really great activities, training and projects that really make a difference to the quality of services that people are receiving. My most recent project involved working with the deaf and hard of hearing community to learn about the barriers they face when accessing primary care services. I learned so much from this experience and it has inspired me to learn British Sign Language."



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch with Healthwatch North Tyneside.



www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk



0191 263 5321



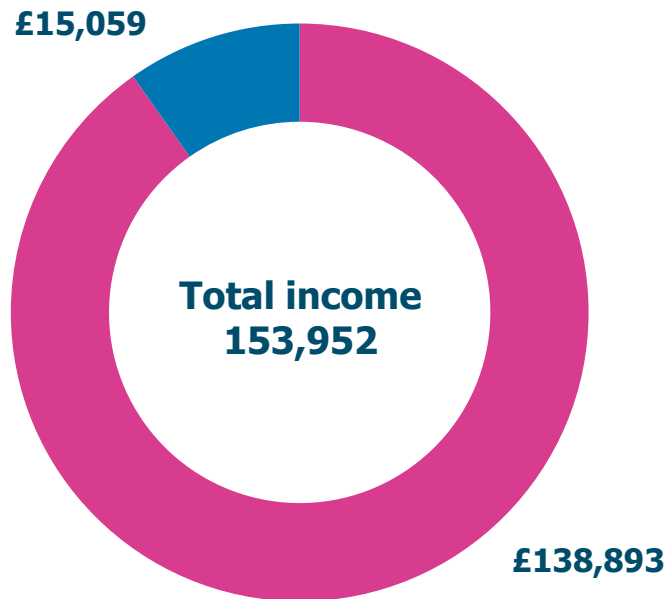
info@hwnt.co.uk

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from North Tyneside Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, to deliver the Healthwatch service in North Tyneside. In addition we receive funding from various organisations to deliver other work.

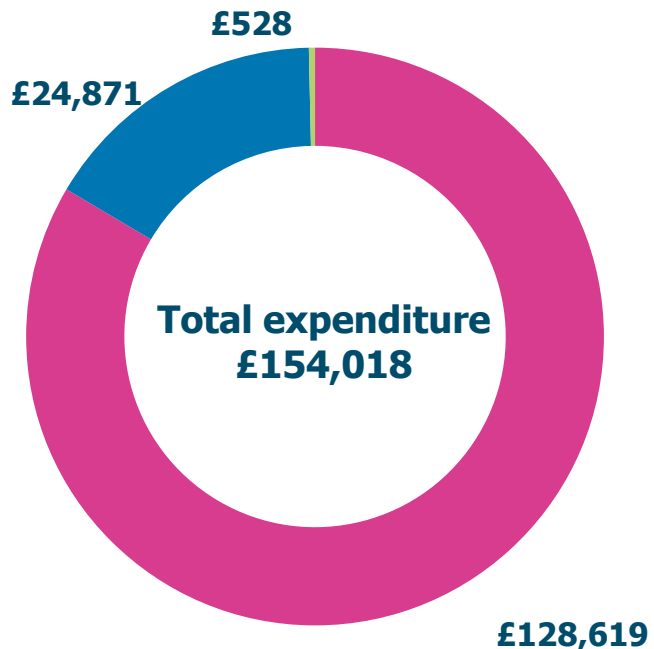
Income

- North Tyneside Council - Core Healthwatch Contract
- Additional funding



Expenditure

- Staff and operating costs
- Activity costs
- Governance costs





Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch North Tyneside uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch board work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. During this reporting year our trustees were: Judy Scott (Chair until November 2020), Julia Charlton (Chair from November 2020), Beth Allan, Natalie Underwood, Theresa Culpin, Bea Groves McDaniel (from November 2020) and Steve Nicklin (until March 2021).

Health and Wellbeing Board and decision making

Healthwatch North Tyneside is represented on the North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board by Julia Charlton, Chair of Healthwatch North Tyneside and Paul Jones, Director of Healthwatch North Tyneside. We play an active role in the Health and Wellbeing Board and the strategic groups that deliver the operational work on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board including: Future Care Board, Living Well Locally Board, Carers Partnership Board, Aging Well Board and Mental Health Integration Boards.

Registered Charity

Healthwatch North Tyneside is a small, independent charity. Registered Charity Number:1160753



Healthwatch North Tyneside
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 healthwatchnt

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/healthwatch-north-tyneside>

-Registered Charity Number:1160753

Please contact us if you need this report in an alternative format.